(d) measures taken or being taken by Government to stabilise the prices of sugar?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. It became necessary to partially offset the increasing quantum of subsidy that had to be paid to bridge the difference between the purchase and issue price of levy sugar.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) The free-sale sugar prices are stabilised by judicious release of monthly sugar quotas.

Income Limit for People Living Below Poverty Line for PDS

*131. PROF. RAM KAPSE: Will the Minister of CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Union Government have fixed Rs. 15,000/- per annum as the maximum income level for the people below the poverty line to be covered under the new Public Distribution Scheme (PDS);

(b) whether State Governments have been directed to prepare a list of the population living below the poverty line;

(c) if so, by when State Governments have been asked to prepare such a list; and

(d) whether it will finally take effect from June 1, 1997?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV): (a) to (d) A Statement on the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) has been made in the Rajya Sabha on 24.2.1997 and the detailed quidelines issued in this regard have also been laid on the Table of the House. As per the guidelines, the State Government/UT Administrations are required to identify the beneficiaries living Below the Poverty Line, based on the provisional estimates arrived at by the Planning Commission for the year 1993-94 adopting the methodology of "Expert Group on Estimation of Proportion and Number of Poor" constituted by the Planning Commission under the Chairmanship of Late Prof. Lakdawala.

The State Governments/UT Administrations have accordingly been asked to identify the beneficiaries Below the Poverty Line, issue special ration cards to them and make all arrangements for delivery of foodgrains to the beneficiaries in a satisfactory and transparent manner. As soon as a State/UT completes this exercise, it can start deriving the benefits under the Targeted PDS. The Scheme of Targeted PDS will, however, become effective throughout the country from 1st June, 1997.

Privatisation of Bharat Leather Corporation Ltd.

*132. SHRI GHUFRAN AZAM: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to privatise the Bharat Leather Corporation Limited, Agra, with immediate effect;

(b) whether Government do not consider the company as a unified platform for imparting training to artisans belonging to SC/ST and Minorities and the company has helped develop these sections of the society; and

(c) the facts and details of each year's results achieved during the past four years by the company on account of sales turnover, production package scheme/system, and cash losses?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) Government has taken 'in principle' decision to convert it into a non-Government company through joint venture route or sale.

(b) BLC has been mainly engaged in trading activities and has not been conducting training programmes for artisans.

(c) The details of production (under the Package assistance Scheme and PSL Factory), total sales turnover, cash losses and net losses of the Corporation during the past four years are given below:

S.No.	Name	1992-93	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96 (Rs. in lakhs)
1.	Production				
	(a) PSL Factory	30.96	22.99	14.31	11.32
	(b) PAS	111.10	247.60	193.00	211.20
2.	Total sales turnover	540.00	501.97	618.59	654.46
3.	Cash losses	35.17	19.92	20.66	30.47
4.	Net losses	124.62	124.68	152.31	198.06

Closure of Industrial Units due to Labour Problems

*133. SHRI V. RAJESHWAR RAO:
DR. SHRIKANT RAMCHANDRA JICHKAR:

Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) the number of industrial units closed due to labour problems during last three years State-wise;

(b) the estimated loss in terms of production and mandays;

(c) the steps being taken to restart the units; and

(d) the steps being taken to prevent the disputes?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM): (a) On the basis of information available with Labour Bureau on closure of establishments under Industrial Disputes Act, 1947, a Statement indicating state-wise number of units closed due to various causes during the last three years *viz.* 1994, 1995 and 1996 is annexed. (*See* below) Specific information about number of closures due to labour problems is not available.

(b) According to available information, the mandays lost and production lost due to industrial *i.e.* strikes and lockout during 1994-96 are given below:—

Year	Mandays lost (Provisional) (In million)	Production lost (Provisional) (Rs. in Crores)
1994	20.98	481.99
1995	16.29	454.59
1996	14.97	248.77

(c) and (d) The Government maintains a close and contrinuous watch over the industrial relations situation in the country. The industrial relations machinery both at the Central and State Level take timely & adequate steps to resolve disputes and reduce work stoppages through mediation, conciliation, arbitration and adjudication. Regular consultation and bipartite discussion with employees' organisations have helped in improving industrial relations.

However, to prevent closure of sick industries, the Government take steps to rehabilitate sick industrial units by referring to BIFR and by formulating rehabilitation/ revival package of these industries wherever feasible, and these are implemented according to a time bound plan with the approval of BIFR.

Statement

State-wise number of units closed during 1994-96 (Provisional)

States/U.Ts.	1994	1995	1996
Andhra Pradesh	-	-	-
Arunachal Pradesh	-	-	-
Assam	1	-	-
Bihar	4	1	2
Goa	1	4	2
Gujarat	46	27	9
Haryana	5	6	5
H.P.	4	..	..
J&K	-	..	..
Karnataka	-	1	..
Kerala	2	1	1
Madhya Pradesh	3	-	3
Maharashtra	52	33	1
Manipur	-	-	-
Meghalaya	-	-	-
Mizoram	-	-	..